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1. The following functions are performed by the DDR Foreign Ministry:

a. It issues visas to residents of the DDR desiring to go abroad and to persons desiring to enter the DDR. At the present time, no visas are issued to DDR residents for travel to Western (non-Communist) countries. Individuals requiring visas may make application in person on Tuesdays and Fridays of each week, the requests being handled by (fnu) Wiedemann, acting chief of the Consular Department. Wiedemann then checks with the Ministry of the Interior of the Land in which the applicant is registered. If no adverse information concerning the applicant is forthcoming from this source, Wiedemann prepares the visa for the signature of Foreign Minister Georg Dertinger. This process consumes from four to six weeks. Dertinger has little if any authority regarding who should or should not be granted a visa, and his signature is a matter of form. At the same time, there is no apparent direct check by the Russians in Berlin concerning persons to whom a visa may or may not be issued, except, of course, with regard to individuals travelling between the DDR and the USSR. It is, however, to be presumed that the Soviet authorities are periodically given a list of persons to whom visas have been issued, and it seems possible that the DDR Ministry of State Security checks on applicants at some point in the visa process with the pertinent Soviet security officials in Berlin, although there is no direct evidence that the MSS is so involved.

b. The DDR Foreign Ministry prepares agreements and treaties in political, economic, cultural, and legal matters. Dr. Reintanz (CDU), head of the Legal Department, is at present preparing a draft of an agreement with Czechoslovakia on cooperation between the two countries in criminal matters. Policy in such affairs, however, is determined by the Soviet authorities in Berlin. For example, during the negotiations between the DDR and Poland concerning the exact location of the boundary line between the two states, Polish Ambassador Jan Izydoreczyk held lengthy conferences with Dertinger and State Secretary Anton Ackermann. In this same period, however, Dertinger had a series of long talks with Soviet Ambassador Pushkin and Political Advisor Semeonov on the matter. As a matter of mechanics, Pushkin often confers with Dertinger in political affairs, while the latter goes to Karlshorst to talk with Semeonov when that is necessary. In the establishment of policy it is difficult to determine whether Ackermann or Dertinger has the more "power". Unquestionably Ackermann is the representative of the Party line within the Foreign Ministry, but it often appears that Dertinger is able to push through his point of view, within limits, vis-à-vis the more realistic Russians and on a short-term basis.

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c. The Ministry concerns itself directly with propaganda activities. During the recent plebiscite against West German remilitarization, Main Departments I and II, headed by Florin and Prenzel respectively, spent a great deal of time in collecting and sorting the results of the alleged balloting in West Germany. Dertinger himself took an active part in establishing and cultivating relations with so-called Christian socialist circles in West Germany in an attempt to win them to the DDR point of view.

d. The Ministry issues the following digests of the world press: 1) Informationsdienst, which appears once a month, is neatly printed and is circulated to about 3,700 addressees in East Germany and the satellite countries. 2) Informationsmaterial and Sondermaterial are badly mimeographed, usually devoted to one or two specific issues of world politics, and are circulated to about 35 addressees, mainly DDR ministers and ambassadors and ambassadors accredited to the DDR. The selection of the news items and the editorial policy and comments are all under the direct control of the head of the Press Department, Meissner (SED), and Dertinger is not consulted in these matters. There is no visible evidence of Soviet control or interference with these publications, and it may be assumed that Meissner and Ackermann are considered sufficiently schooled in the SED line to obviate more active Soviet intervention. In general the policy with regard to unexpected world developments is to withhold comment until the official Soviet viewpoint is made known through TASS reports.

e. The Ministry concerns itself with the entertainment and household problems of the diplomatic corps in East Berlin. These matters are dealt with by Zinsser (CDU), head of the Administrative Department and by Thun (NDP), chief of the Protocol Department. These functions, however, are hardly of a political nature.

2. Insofar as decisions have to be made in the Foreign Ministry in order to implement established DDR government policy, such decisions are usually threshed out at sessions of the so-called Little Commission. This commission is composed of a half-dozen of the leading functionaries in the Ministry, and it meets for several hours approximately twice a week. At Little Commission meetings Meissner usually speaks at some length on political trends in providing background for the agenda of the day. In addition, Dertinger and Ackermann attend the weekly sessions of the DDR Council of Ministers, where policy matters of a higher level are discussed and where the SED has a clear majority.

3. The following notes depict the actual workings of the DDR Foreign Ministry:

a. Before giving a scheduled speech, Dertinger always refers his material to Ackermann for the latter's concurrence. The manner in which Dertinger does this suggests to observers that such submission is more than a polite gesture and that Ackermann in fact has the power to require that changes be made.

b. Ackermann's approval must be obtained by Dertinger before the latter can make important personnel decisions. At present Ackermann is withholding his consent to the appointment of Dertinger's personal assistant, although it may be noteworthy that the State Secretary has not openly vetoed Dertinger's choice. In line with prior agreement, Dertinger should be allowed to have as his personal assistant a member of his own party, but Ackermann is sponsoring another candidate who belongs to the SED, and the matter has not been settled to date.

c. Meissner has remarked openly to members of his staff that as long as the occupying power remains in the DDR, the latter is not a sovereign nation. In referring specifically to a Ministry policy matter, Meissner added, "The Russians have the last word".

4. It must be assumed that in really important political affairs the DDR is powerless to take steps independent of the Soviet authorities. Within the framework of policy implementation delegated by the Soviets to the DDR and to the Foreign Ministry, the SED is, in most instances, the real authority. In specific cases, however, Dertinger is able to alter the Party course temporarily, by agreement with the Russians, in matters of purely tactical importance. At the same time it would be incorrect to depict Dertinger as a mere rubber-stamp, supported by the SED for the purpose of reading prepared speeches at mass rallies. The Foreign Minister is an ambitious careerist, an opportunist, and a good speaker. It is, in a sense, even meaningless to ask whether Ackermann or Dertinger or Semeonov really wields the power in the Foreign Ministry, since it is Dertinger's sole desire to continue in his position as long as he possibly can and, to this end, his attitude may in most instances be more Communist than that

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of the SED functionaries. Indeed, it is on the fallacy that the East CDU somehow represents the last stronghold of anti-Soviet or anti-Communist sentiment within the DDR that Bertinger is capitalizing to retain his comfortable office, his duty car, his mansion in East Berlin and his home in the Berlin suburbs.*

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